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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8635
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1780
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5254
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8854
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6426
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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4257
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

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SUBJECT: BURMA: KYAW THU ON CABINET RESHUFFLE, FUTURE OF
TCG

¶1. (SBU) At a February 4 diplomatic reception, Tripartite Core Group (TCG) Chairman Kyaw Thu informed the Charge that he has left his position as Deputy Foreign Minister and replaced U Than Nyunt as the head of Burma's Civil Service Selection and Training Board, a Cabinet-level position. Kyaw Thu reported that U Than Nyunt, Minister of Construction Major General Saw Tun, and Minister for Immigration and Manpower Major General Saw Lwin had all retired. For the moment at least, Minister of Electric Power 2 Major General Khin Maung Myint will also serve as Construction Minister, and Minister of Home Affairs Major General Khin Yi will concurrently cover Immigration and Manpower.

¶2. (SBU) Curiously, state media has not yet reported these Cabinet changes, as has been the case in the past. However, the February 5 edition of the regime-daily New Light of Myanmar newspaper features a captioned photo of Kyaw Thu that describes him as the civil service chief, with no mention that his tenure is less than one-week old.

¶3. (SBU) Kyaw Thu told the Charge that all three of the ministers who were replaced were in their 70s and have been showing signs of aging. He stressed that their retirement was due to their age and had nothing to do with the 2010 elections. For his part, Kyaw Thu noted that he had no experience with personnel. The directive for his move came from above, he said, and he will comply. Kyaw Thu added that he was relieved he did not get the immigration post, given the Rohingya issue on the radar.

¶4. (SBU) Kyaw Thu confirmed he will retain the TCG chairmanship, but said he will likely spend most of this time in Nay Pyi Taw, coming to Rangoon perhaps every couple of weeks. He said he intends to create a strong team of TCG subordinates in Rangoon so he can handle most issues by phone. Kyaw Thu confirmed he will attend the February 9 Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) launch in Bangkok. He relayed to the CDA that a key GOB message at the PONREPP event will be that donors who want the TCG to continue beyond July will have to commit funding beyond that point. Otherwise, according to Kyaw Thu, the GOB will see no need to continue the TCG.

VAJDA